



## Safety Sense



FY 15, 11th Edition

### No one can watch out for your child's safety better than you

August /September 2015

August is here with upwards of one million motorcycles visiting for the 75th Annual Sturgis Motorcycle Rally. Once that madness ends and you think that things have settled down, school will start. Thousands of youngsters heading off to school: walking, riding bikes, skateboards or waiting for the bus. Then will come the afternoon bells that releases the little minions to race home.

Our part is two-fold: slow down and watch for children in and around schools, crossings and anywhere that kids will congregate. Also we teach our children the value of crossing at a corner, especially ones with crosswalks, look both ways, walk your bikes and boards across intersections and whenever possible, travel in groups.

No one wants to read about children involved in an accident. Yet all too often across the country, minors from 6 to 16 are injured or killed traversing to and from school. Do your part and stay focused on the drive: no texting, no talking on the cell, no distractions. Educate your kids on the hazards of being encountered by a vehicle: damage, injury or death.

When it comes to your children riding in a car,

do you know the limits/ages to transition from a child restraint seat to a booster seat, to riding in the front seat? Infants need to be in infant seats and rear facing. They can transition to a forward facing child restraint seat IAW manufacturer's recommendations. They can move to a booster seat when they are just too big for the child seat, but don't just skip the booster seat and go straight into a standard seat belt. You can safely switch your child to a booster seat if he/she's at least 4 years old *and* they weigh 40 pounds or more or has grown too tall for the car seat (when their shoulders are higher than the top set of harness-strap slots in the car seat's back). Whatever you do, don't move your child to a booster seat simply because they had their fourth birthday. Car seats are the safest option, so keep using yours as long as it fits. You'll also need to check the car seat law in your state (you can use the Child Safety Laws tool at the National Safe Kids Campaign site to look up local regulations: <http://www.safekids.org/statelaws?gclid=CIPhINTV28YCFcNhfGodokyDRA>). If you don't know how to install it correctly, or are just not sure if it's done right, check with your local hospital, fire station or law

enforcement agency. Many of these professionals are trained in the correct manner to install a car seat. Studies have shown more than half of the car seats on the road are not installed correctly.

No matter when your child finally outgrows their car seat, it's imperative that you don't skip the booster-seat step and go straight to using seat belts alone. Although many parents do this (94 percent, according to recent reports), it's a dangerous mistake. Why? Because a booster positions your vehicle's lap and shoulder belts correctly on your child's torso. Without it, the belts will be too high, falling across her belly and neck, where they can do serious damage in a crash. Given the fact that seat belts fit some shorter *adults* incorrectly, it's not surprising that most kids need to use booster seats until at least age 8.

All too often the argument is used that "we didn't have them when I was a kid" my other kids were just fine without one. This may be true, but remember that 40 years ago seat belts were just being required, 30 years ago car seats were just being implemented and booster seats were unheard of. Of course, back then, pediatric mortality in motor vehicle accidents was more than double than today's standards. (continued on page2)



#### SDARNG SOHO Personnel:

##### MAJ Lori Starr

Occupational Health Nurse  
605-737-6713  
[lori.l.starr.mil@mail.mil](mailto:lori.l.starr.mil@mail.mil)

##### CW5 Lonny Hofer

Safety and Occupational Health Mgr  
605-737-6703  
[lonald.e.hofer.mil@mail.mil](mailto:lonald.e.hofer.mil@mail.mil)

##### CW4 James "BJ" McGuire

State Safety Officer  
605-737-6298  
[james.a.mcguire16.mil@mail.mil](mailto:james.a.mcguire16.mil@mail.mil)

##### WO1 Jason Bestgen

Industrial Hygiene Technician  
605-737-6620  
[jason.c.bestgen.mil@mail.mil](mailto:jason.c.bestgen.mil@mail.mil)

##### SFC Brian Gessner

State Safety NCO  
[brian.p.gessner.mil@mail.mil](mailto:brian.p.gessner.mil@mail.mil)

##### SGT Don Gibbs

Safety Tech/Safety NCO  
605-737-6501  
[donald.d.gibbs2.mil@mail.mil](mailto:donald.d.gibbs2.mil@mail.mil)

##### Office Fax

605-737-6989

## Childs safety (continued)

And when it comes to cars, trucks and SUVs, don't be in a hurry to put the kids in the front seat. Airbags are designed for adults. Typically the age range is 13, but again, go by the child's stature and build. Airbags have caused the death of hundreds of children who should not have been in the front seat due to their size and weight.

Until they reach the teen years, kids really need you to look out for them. During the teen years, they may not admit it, but they really want you to guide them in a safe direction. As parents, it is up to us to make the safe choices for the younger generation.

And just remember that after you have your children properly re-

strained in the car, you need to wear your seat belt. Air bags and seat belts have proven their value far too often to be ignored.



### Child seat facts:

Car seat use reduces the risk for death to infants (aged <1 year) by 71%; and to toddlers (aged 1–4 years) by 54% in passenger vehicles.

Booster seat use reduces the risk for serious injury by 45% for children aged 4–8 years when compared with seat belt use alone.

For older children and adults, seat belt use reduces the risk for death and serious injury by approximately half.



*One critical location for a wheel chalk is on trailers at a loading dock. The trailer on the left is ready for a fork truck to load or unload. As a forklift/fork truck operator, never take someone's word that a trailer is ready for you; stop and check. Its your life, its your responsibility to check it out.*

## Wheel chucks are the thorn in every drivers side

If you have been driving an Army Motor Vehicle (other than a NTV or GSA) for any length of time, you have probably heard "Wheel chucks!" and had a Motor Sergeant, First Sergeant of Safety Officer pointing sarcastically at the tires of your vehicle. They can be a pain in the tail gate, but there is specific reasons they are required.

Occasionally, the brakes fail. Now I know its hard to imagine that a piece of government equipment could fail, but it has been known to happen. In fact, there have been recorded deaths in theater because a vehicle

rolled while Soldiers were underneath it. A wheel chalk properly placed could

*Don't second guess it, If you park it, chalk it!*

have prevented a tragic death.

Imagine if you were the parent, spouse or sibling of a someone killed or critically injured from this. How would you feel if someone in your unit was hurt or died because you didn't chalk the tires on your truck.

Its required by standards and by common sense. And use them sensibly: Don't chalk the uphill side of a truck if you only have one. If there are none, then use blocks of wood, sections of a log or other device that will prevent tires from rolling, then report the missing BII. Also, ensure your using the right wheel chucks. Wheel chucks should be 1/4 the height of the tire and have a sufficient angle to fill in the space between the tire and the ground. Talk to your maintenance shop or safety personnel to find out what right looks like.

# I'm counting on you

1

Have you got the right car seat?

2

Have you fitted and adjusted it correctly?

3

Do you know how to check it properly?

Do you know the five common errors that parents commit when installing child restraint seats?

If you have a child, grandchild, niece or nephew that rides with you, you really need to go to <http://www.safekids.org/blog/five-common-mistakes-most-parents-make-using-car-seats> and research whether or not your child seat is the right one and is it installed correctly. You can also visit you local fire or police department and ask for their assistance [www.safekids.org](http://www.safekids.org)